



Michigan Corrections Organization
421 W. Kalamazoo St.
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 485-3310
mco-seiu.org

Michigan Department of Corrections
206 E. Michigan Ave.
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 335-1426
michigan.gov/corrections



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CONTACT: MCO Communications Director Anita Lloyd

(517)485-3310 anita@mco-seiu.org

MDOC Public Information Officer Chris Gautz

(517)241-0363 gautzc@michigan.gov

MCO AND MDOC WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP STAFF SAFE WITH OFFICER DIGNITY INITIATIVE

It's not uncommon for corrections officers to have feces, urine, and other bodily fluids thrown on them at work.

Now, Michigan Corrections Organization (MCO) and the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) are partnering with the Michigan State Police (MSP) and Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM) to develop comprehensive training to enable MDOC prison administrators to better deal with these events in a health-conscious and respectful manner. MCO, MDOC, MSP, and PAAM are calling this effort the **Officer Dignity Initiative**.

Specifically, the Officer Dignity Initiative focuses on prevention and response to what corrections officers call being "**dressed out**," which means an inmate threw urine, blood, feces, spit, or another unknown substance onto an employee, or exposed himself to an employee for personal or sexual gratification.

"As corrections professionals, we feel this type of behavior should not be tolerated and inmates engaging in such acts should be prosecuted and held accountable," said Andy Potter, MCO Vice President and Chief of Staff. "For the affected staff, these types of revolting acts leave the individual feeling extremely violated and potentially expose them to disease and infection."

With support from the MDOC and others in the law enforcement community, the **Officer Dignity Initiative** will be covered as a part of a three-day MDOC prison inspectors' conference and will include training on crime scene processing, evidence handling, writing, and compiling documentation, along with other pieces needed for successful prosecution.

"Dignity and respect on the job is paramount in any work setting, and corrections is no different. We want staff to know that when they are assaulted, the MDOC will do everything in its power to make sure each and every case is handled professionally and turned over to MSP for referral," MDOC Deputy Director, Ken McKee said.

The inspectors' training, which is led by MSP, will be held in late October.

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Michigan Corrections Organization/SEIU represents more than 6,500 corrections officers working at state prisons and forensic security assistants at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry.